



NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Public Outreach Meetings Scheduled

State Parks' Vision for the Central Valley

"Few of them realized, for example, that, in the San Joaquin Valley and the Sacramento Delta, they gazed upon lands of almost fabulous fertility, lands that, in truth, can only be compared with those of the Nile Valley, and the other great river-valley gardens of the world."

Carey McWilliams, 1935

SACRAMENTO – California State Park Director Ruth Coleman announced today that several public outreach meetings will be held to introduce more California residents to parks and recreation opportunities that are available in the Central Valley.

State Parks wants to hear from residents and organizations in this rapidly growing region of the state about the needs, interests and potential partnership opportunities that may exist.

Coleman acknowledged that the Central Valley has long been overlooked and instituted a program that will guide State Parks' future development and acquisition program in the Central Valley, a 50 mile-wide and 450 mile-long heartland of the state that is home to 17 percent of the state's population.

The strategy is known as "State Parks' Central Valley Vision." Coleman said she intends through this 20-year roadmap to increase the presence of California State Parks in the Central Valley both to meet the needs of Valley residents, and for protection and interpretation of "incredible natural, cultural, historical and recreational resources found only in the Valley."

"In recent years, State Parks has focused largely on urban areas, along the south coast and in the redwoods," Coleman said. "Now, we believe the Central Valley is an area whose time has come. It is an area that is largely under-represented by state or federal land managers when compared to the desert, the Sierra-Nevada, northeast and northwest California and elsewhere throughout the state," she said.

The department's Central Valley Vision is aimed at the following:

- Expanding recreational facilities for camping, day use, fishing, boating and on trails with a focus on river corridors, reservoirs and the Delta to meet the needs of a diverse population;
- Expanding parklands along watersheds such as the Sacramento, Tuolumne, Stanislaus, San Joaquin and Merced rivers, particularly where partnerships with other public landholders exist;
- Partnering in preserving and protecting vanishing natural resources that were once abundantly evident; and
- Preserving and interpreting the rich history associated with the Valley's past, including the full sweep of agricultural history, Native American past and continuing life ways, Highway 99, the Valley's oil industry, and the stories of immigrant workers from around the world.

The public is invited to attend one of several outreach meetings this spring (additional public outreach meetings will be held fall 2005):

Wednesday, April 27, 2005: 3:30 p.m. – 5:30 p.m.
 Woodland Opera House
 340 2nd Street
 Woodland, CA

Tuesday, May 31, 2005: 3:30 p.m. – 5:30 p.m.
 C.S.U., Fresno
 Student Union
 5421 N. Maple Avenue
 Fresno, CA

Wednesday, June 1, 2005: 3:30 p.m. -- 5:30 p.m.
 Resources Building Auditorium
 1416 9th Street, 1st Floor
 Sacramento, CA

Wednesday, June 8, 2005: 3:30 p.m. -- 5:30 p.m.
 Bidwell Mansion
 525 The Esplanade
 Chico, CA

The Central Valley actually consists of two valleys, the San Joaquin and the Sacramento, and together they are experiencing an explosive growth in population. According to the latest census information, there were 5.5 million residents in the Central Valley in 2000, and that figure is expected to increase to more than eight million by 2020 and 11.5 million by 2040.

Geographically, the Central Valley ranges from roughly the northern side of the Tehachapi's in the south to Red Bluff in the north, a distance of about 450 miles and encompassing part or all of 18 central California counties. It accounts for 15 million acres, or 15 percent of California's total acreage. California State Parks manages 32 units with a total acreage of 94,700 acres within this area, or about 7 percent of the total state park lands.

"Interestingly, these same units receive seven percent (6.4 million) of the total annual State Park visitation (85 million), and we expect even larger numbers of park visitors over the coming years as urban centers continue to grow," said Coleman.

"We believe the California State Parks' Central Valley Vision will assist the state Legislature in crafting future funding programs that will benefit this key geographic and demographic portion of the state," Coleman said.

The Central Valley's 32 State Park units, from north to the south, include:

William B. Ide Adobe State Historic Park, Woodson Bridge State Recreation Area, Bidwell-Sacramento River State Park, Bidwell Mansion SHP, Lake Oroville SRA, Clay Pit State Vehicular Recreation Area, Colusa-Sacramento River SRA, Sutter Buttes, Woodland Opera House SHP, Folsom Lake SRA, Folsom Powerhouse SHP, State Capitol Museum, Sutter's Fort SHP/State Indian Museum, Governor's Mansion SHP.

Old Sacramento SHP/Railroad Museum, Leland Stanford Mansion SHP, Prairie City SVRA, Stone Lake, Delta Meadows River Park, Brannan Island SRA, Franks Tract SRA, Bethany Reservoir SRA, Caswell Memorial SRA, San Luis Reservoir SRA, Pacheco State Park, George J. Hatfield SRA, Great Valley Grasslands State Park, McConnell SRA, Turlock Lake SRA, Millerton Lake SRA, Colonel Allensworth SHP and Tule Elk State Reserve.

For more information about the Department's Central Valley Vision, visit www.parks.ca.gov.

What others are saying:

"People, resources and policies invested in planning for the future will be the critical elements for the well-being of the Central Valley."

Carol Whiteside, President
The Great Valley Center

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